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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

September 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Cuba

Former Cuban Ambassador Arroyo, accompanied by Capt. Manuel R. Giberga, former Chief of Naval Intelligence of Cuba, called upon me on the afternoon of September 27th and stated that they had come to bring me up to date on the Cuban situation and to make a request that his report would be taken to the level of the Secretary of Defense. Mr. Clyde W. Elliott was also present during the conversation.

Former Ambassador Arroyo stated that Evilio Duque, Head of the Rebel Groups now fighting against Castro in Cuba, had visited him two days prior to our conversation. He stated that he had been in close contact with Duque for a long period of time and has been assisting him in every way possible. He also stated that Marcelino Garcia is second in command of this Rebel movement. He endorsed Garcia very highly and stated that Garcia had worked for him for a period of time before he became Ambassador from Cuba to the U.S. Arroyo seemed to have great confidence in Garcia and said that Garcia is really the "brains" of the Rebel movement in Cuba at this time. Arroyo went on to state as follows:

(a) That Evilio Duque is operating in the Escambray Mountains at the present time and has been doing considerable damage to Castro's formations by sabotage and ambushes but that his operations were greatly reduced because of the lack of explosives, arms, and ammunition.

(b) That the Rebel movement in Cuba is now formed into four groups and have a relationship under the leadership of Evilio Duque similar to a "Confederation".

(c) That the Rebel leaders in Cuba, upon his advice, have now decided that Castro must be overthrown at the earliest time by the Cubans themselves operating within Cuba.

(d) That Rebel leaders want no relationship with any of the Cuban political groups now in exile in the United States. He was particularly bitter in his denouncement of Verona, who is now the Head of the

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Revolutionary Council in Miami, saying that in the 40 years that Verona had been an adult strong enough to fight that he had never participated in any of the Revolutions in Cuba within that period of time. He also expressed his feeling that Verona is probably the most unpopular man that could of been chosen to head any political group, particularly among the Cubans remaining in Cuba.

(e) That Evilio Duque now has three ships under his control and can move arms, ammunition, and supplies to groups into Cuba if they are made available.

(f) That the entire underground movement has now been con federated into four groups, under the general leadership of Evilio Duque.

(g) That the attitude of the peasants has radically changed within the past few months and that they are giving considerable support to the Rebel groups because of their hatred for Castro and his leadership. He claimed that only 15% of the Cubans would really support Castro in case of a showdown and that approximately 40% were sitting on the fence waiting to see whether or not any operation could be successful against Castro and his forces. It is his belief that if there was the slightest chance for the Rebel movement to succeed, this 40% of the people would immediately support the Rebel groups.

(h) That there are many men who want to join the Rebel groups but cannot because of the shortage of arms, ammunition, and explosives. He emphasized the fact that the Rebels would ask for no aid of any kind except arms, ammunition, and supplies sufficient to enable them to overthrow Castro.

(i) That food shortages have become critical and people have to stand in line for hours to get the few supplies that are available and the general public is becoming more disgusted with the Castro regime day by day.

(j) That the Cuban Army Emblem prior to Castro was a round patch worn on the sleeves of the uniform and painted on various types of equipment. This patch was red with a white star. Castro has now substituted the hammer and sickle for the white star on the old Cuban shoulder patch.

(k) That he had made a considerable study of what had happened to the 25,000 children who were sent to Russia from Spain in 1938 after the Spanish Civil War, and he has found that upon reaching Russia they

were settled in a village by themselves which was built to have a Spanish atmosphere and that from the time of their arrival until even today those who managed to survive were indoctrinated in the Marxism theory and all have become hardened Communists. These Spaniards retained their language and were also taught to speak Russian fluently.

- (l) That Castro, since his take-over of the Cuban government, has sent 14,000 blank passports to Russia to be used by the Russians in sending these Spaniards to Cuba and other Latin American countries as Cuban citizens. He claims that at least 14,000 of these indoctrinated Spaniards are now either travelling in Latin American countries as Cubans or serving in Cuban Embassies wherever they are located. He further stated that they are actually under Soviet control through the cooperation of Castro.
- (m) That the Cuban troops and militia have the finest type of weapons and that many are armed with the NATO rifles.
- (n) That Castro is smuggling arms into Venezuela in large quantities. He claims to have irrefutable evidence on this particular point.

Former Ambassador Arroyo made a very strong plea for arms, ammunition, explosives, and some food supplies in order that the Rebel groups now opposing Castro might expand their operations against the Castro forces. He suggested that they be supplied through a third country. He also said that he had discussed this matter of providing supplies to the Rebel groups with several Latin American Ambassadors, and he felt sure that Guatemala, Venezuela and Nicaragua would be glad to cover for the United States if a decision could be made to support the Rebels in this way.

[Handwritten signature]
GRAVES B. ERSKINE
General, U.S.MC (Ret.)
Assistant to the
Secretary of Defense
(Special Operations)

Copies to:

DepSecDef
J-2, JCS
ISA



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DOES NOT APPLY

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MEMORANDUM TO: Mr. Dulles [REDACTED] *returning*

The attached memorandum for the record came in an envelope addressed to General Cabell. A copy is being held for him and copies have also been sent to DD/P and C/WH.

[REDACTED]

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JSE (2 Oct 61)
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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